(b) what is the number of letters etc. which were acknowledged within 15 days and what is the number of those which have not been replied to finally so far;

(c) what are the reasons for not acknowledging the same within 15 days as also for not sending any final reply within three months; and

(d) what is the number of officers who have been found quality for delaying or not acknowledging the letters etc. or delaying/not sending their final replies and also for misguiding the members of Parliament and what punishment has been awarded to them?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (KUMARI GIRIJA VYAS): (a) The number of VIP cases (including references from MPs & Ministers) received in the Ministry of I&B during the six months period from 1-1-92 to 30-6-92 was 1854.

(b) to (d) Acknowledgements are invariably sent within 15 days or receipt of the VIP cases. During the period 1-1-92 to 30-6-92, final replies were sent in respect of 1942 VIP references which related to 763 references pending disposal as on 31-12 91, and 1854 references received during the period 1-1-92 to 30.6.92. As on 30-6-92, there were, in all, 675 cases pending disposal of which 338 references were pending disposal for over 3 months. All out efforts are made to send final replies as expeditiously as possible. However, it has not been possible to dispose of all references within three months as collection of information from the Media Units which, in turn, have to collect the same from their field formations, is at times to mislead the VIPs, there has been no deliberate attempt on the part of any officer to delay acknowledgements/replies or to mislead the VIPs, there has been no case for action against any of the officers.

Prosecution cases by RLC, Dhanbad

3207. SHRI RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) the number and details of prosecution proposals sent to Ministry of Labour by the Regional Labour Commissioner (Central), Dhanbad for approval and have been kept pending as on 1st July, 1992;

(b) the details of the prosecution cases cleared by the RLC, Dhanbad and pending with different courts of Dhanbad and since when they have been pending as on 1st July, 1992; and

(c) the steps taken to expedite them?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI PABAN SINGH GHATOWAR): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Rehabilitation of bonded labour

3208. SHRI KAMAL MORARKA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Bonded labour freed and their debt liquidated during the Seventh Five Year Plan particularly in 1990-91 and 1991-92;

(b) how many bonded labourers have been rehabilitated and in what manner;

(c) whether the Central Government have issued comprehensive guidelines to the States for preparing village level schemes for rehabilitation of bonded labours and

(d) if so, the details thereof and what has been the response of State Governments in this regard?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI PABAN SINGH GHATOWAR): (a) During the Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-86 to 1989-90) a total number of 53,530 bonded labourers were identified and freed. The number of bonded labour identified and freed during the years 1990-91 and 1991-92, are 9,972 and 846 respectively. So far as liquidation of debts is concerned the Act provides that every obligation of a bonded labour to repay any bonded debt shall be deemed to have been extinguished However, the figure of the debt so liquidated is not maintained.